DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 250 619 CG 017 818

AUTHOR Emmons, Robert A.; Diener, Ed
TITLE An Interactional Approach to the Study of Personality and Emotion.
PUB DATE Aug 84
NOTE 26p.; A version of this paper was presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (92nd, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, August 24-28, 1984).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Affective Behavior; College Students; *Emotional Response; Higher Education; *Individual Power; Interaction; *Personality Traits; Social Cognition
IDENTIFIERS Situational Variables

ABSTRACT

Research has proposed that personality traits may be derived from emotions and that individuals tend to judge another's personality traits on the basis of observed emotional reactions. To examine the relationship between personality and emotional traits within ecologically valid settings, 22 college students (19 females, 3 males) rated their emotions in a wide variety of work, recreation, social, and alone situations, sampled over a 30-day period. They were also administered the Personality Research Form and the Eysenck Personality Inventory. An analysis of the results showed that, although theoretically predictable relationships between certain personality traits and specific emotions averaged across situations, the most meaningful results were obtained in distinguishing chosen from imposed situations. The need for affiliation correlated positively with feeling friendly in chosen-social situations, and negatively with feeling friendly in imposed-alone situations. Extraverts reported more joy in social situations of their own choosing compared to imposed-alone situations. Neuroticism correlated with reported feelings of unhappiness in imposed social situations; but neurotics were less unhappy when they choose to be alone. Need for achievement correlated significantly with productive feelings in chosen work situations, and negatively with productive feelings in imposed recreation situations. These findings support an interactional approach to the study of personality and emotions. (BL)

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An Interactional Approach to the Study of Personality and Emotion

Robert A. Emmons & Ed Diener

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Running Head: PERSONALITY AND EMOTION

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between personality and emotional traits within ecologically valid settings. Twenty-two subjects rated their emotions in a wide variety of work, recreation, social, and alone situations sampled over a 30 day period. They were also administered the Personality Research Form and the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire. Although theoretically predictable relationships were found between certain personality traits and specific emotions averaged across situations, it was not until we distinguished chosen from imposed situations that the most meaningful results were obtained. Both temperament and non-temperament personality traits were found to be related to specific emotions. Implications of the present findings for research on situation selection and the status of personality traits are discussed.

Relationship Between Personality and Emotional Traits

The present research is focused on the relationships which exist between personality traits and emotions. In particular, we conducted an exploration of whether certain types of individuals experience certain emotions more frequently in certain types of situations. Plutchik (1980) has proposed that traits may be derived from emotions or result from a combination of emotions, and that people tend to judge another's personality traits on the basis of observed emotional reactions. Plutchik in fact defines a trait as "a tendency or disposition to react to interpersonal situations with certain emotional reactions" (1980, p. 173). Yet there has been little empirical research on this provocative idea. Most of the previous work in this area has focused on the maladjusted personality and emotional conflict. For example, psychoanalytic formulations (Fenichel, 1945) posit that recurrent emotional conflicts lead to the development of stable character patterns. Similarly, Kellerman (1980) theorizes that certain personality types are derived from particular defensive styles employed in the service of managing specific emotions. One purpose of the present research was to examine the relationship between normal personality traits and emotions, using a representative sampling of both, obtained in ecologically valid settings. In this study we examined the relationship between specific personality needs and basic emotions such as anger and depression, as well as more personality-specific emotions, or what may be called emotion traits, such as feeling sociable, aggressive, and cautious.

Another major purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between personality and emotion in relation to personality-environment interaction. One form of interactionism, the congruence model, has received some attention in the past (French, Rodgers, & Cobb, 1974; Kahana, 1975; Pervin, 1968). The assumption in this model is that the better the "fit" between the person and the environment, the more favorable the consequences or outcome for the person. Outcome has primarily been measured in terms of performance (Pervin, 1968) and satisfaction (Kahana, 1975; Pervin, 1968). Recently, Diener and his colleagues (Diener, Larsen, & Emmons, 1984; Emmons, Diener, & Larsen, 1983) have offered an affect-congruence model of interactionism in which affect is the outcome measured when a state of congruence is presumed to exist between personality and the environment. However, both Diener et al. (1984) and Emmons et al. (1983) found little support for their hypothesis that individuals should feel more positive affect and less negative affect when in situations which are congruent with their personality. A potential problem may be that they examined only global positive and negative affect, rather than more specific emotions. Thus, in the present study we examined whether individuals experienced more specific emotions (e.g. anger, joy, loneliness) when in situations which are congruent with their personalities.

The final purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between personality and emotions in chosen versus imposed situations, as our previous research has shown this distinction to be an important moderator of personality-environment interaction (Emmons et al., 1983). Emmons et al. found that time spent in chosen situations was much more

predictable from personality trait scores than was time spent in imposed situations. Also, when required to be in situations which are incongruent with their personalities, people tend to experience more negative affect as compared to when in situations which are congruent with their personalities (Emmons et al., 1983). The present study examined the relationships which exist between personality and specific emotions within both chosen and imposed situations.

Method

The study was conducted in two phases. In phase one, participants generated a list of 20 situations from their current lives, and were also administered two personality inventories. In phase two, participants kept daily records of their moods and the situations they encountered over a period of one month.

Participants. Subjects were 22 (19 females, 3 males) University of Illinois undergraduates participating in a semester long research and course project entitled "The Relationship of Situations to Affect". They were recruited through an announcement posted in the psychology department describing an independent study opportunity. Enrollment in the course reflected varying motivations, ranging from the desire to learn about oneself to the absence of traditional homework and grading procedures. Subjects received three hours of course credit for their participation.

Procedure

Situations. Each subject generated a list of 20 representative situations from their current lives. Situations were defined in terms of who was there, when and where it was taking place, and what was happening,

and were thus defined in the same manner as by Pervin (1981). Both non-social (alone), semi-social (e.g. studying in the library) and social (interacting with others) situations were included in the subjects' lists, as well as work and study, recreation, family, and maintenance (showering, walking to class) situations. Subjects were instructed to include only situations which typically last at least 15 minutes. Following completion of the daily study (described below), subjects indicated into which of four situational categories (social, alone, work, recreation) each of their 20 situations most clearly belonged. It should be pointed out that these categories are not independent; for example, social situations include both work and recreation situations. Of course, work and recreation situations are independent, as are social and alone situations. The usefulness of classifying situations in this manner has been demonstrated in our other work (Diener et al., 1984; Emmons et al., 1983; Emmons, Diener, & Larsen, 1984).

Mood Report. Participants filled out a mood report daily for 30 consecutive days. On the form they indicated the extent to which they felt a number of different emotions in up to five situations per day. Subjects were instructed to rate only those situations which appeared on their list of 20. If they encountered less than five situations on a given day, they were to rate only those situations encountered. The mood form consisted of 12 unipolar affect adjective scales and 12 bipolar adjective scales. The unipolar adjectives included happy, depressed/blue, joyful, unhappy, pleased, frustrated, enjoyment/fun, angry/hostile, lonely, nurturant, and productive. These were rated on a seven point scale where 1= felt not at all and 7= felt extremely much. The bipolar

adjectives included domineering versus submissive, bored versus interested/involved, friendly/sociable versus unfriendly, impulsive versus cautious/wary, passive versus active/aroused, competitive versus cooperative, intimate versus non-intimate, aggressive versus peaceful/docile, stressed/anxious versus relaxed, self-confident versus unsure, inhibited versus uninhibited, and independent versus dependent. These were rated on a nine point, bipolar scale on which both extremes (one and nine) were labelled felt "very much" and the midpoint (five) was labelled "neutral". The adjectives were chosen such that both basic emotions such as joy and anger (Plutchik, 1980) were included, as well as what Ortony and Clore (1981) refer to as emotion-trait hybrids (friendly, competitive, lonely) and cognitive-state words (bored, self-confident). In order to estimate the reliability of the emotion ratings, temporal stability coefficients were computed on them by comparing the mean ratings for the first two weeks of the study (across all situations) with the second two weeks. The coefficients ranged from .59 (passive versus active/aroused) to .94 (friendly/sociable vs. unfriendly) with an average of .83. Thus, the emotion ratings are quite reliable. With the exception of "angry/hostile", there was sufficient variance in the ratings of the emotion words so that restriction of range was not a problem. The mean for "angry/hostile" was extremely small (1.70 on a seven-point scale) as was its standard deviation (.70).

Subjects also indicated whether they believed they had freely chosen the situation or whether it had been imposed on them, on a nine point bipolar scale where 1= strongly chose and 9= strongly imposed. For the analyses to be reported below, situations rated four or less were classified as chosen, and those rated six or higher classified as imposed.

It was difficult to decide on what criteria should be used for the inclusion of the five situations on each subject's daily report. It was debated as to whether, for example, the first five, the most salient five, or the five in which the strongest emotions were felt should be included. It was decided that the five situations of the longest duration for each subject for each day would be the ones recorded. It was believed that this was the most objective criteria and would introduce the least bias into the results. If the same situation was encountered more than once in the same day, subjects based their rating on the one of longest duration. Subjects were instructed to fill out part of the form in the late afternoon, at their convenience, and the remainder of it at the end of each day just before going to sleep. The rationale behind this was that it was not believed that subjects could accurately recall the differential moods felt in each of five different situations if they had waited until the end of the day to complete the form. Since the participants had become familiar with their 20 situations, they had an idea of which situations they would be encountering later that evening when they were making their afternoon rating. Each participant was required to turn in the previous day's form the following day in order to ensure daily completion.

Personality Measures. Subjects were administered the Personality Research Form (PRF; Jackson, 1974) and the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975). These inventories were selected because they are widely accepted and validated research instruments which tap a variety of personality dimensions. The inventories were completed in small groups of three to five individuals,

prior to the daily study. The participants were given feedback on their scores following completion of the daily study. The means and standard deviations of our sample on the personality scales were similar to the published norms for college students (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975; Jackson, 1974). The range and standard deviation of all scores were large enough such that restriction of range was not a potential problem.

Hypotheses. Given the emotion terms and the personality dispositions examined in this study, the formulation of specific hypotheses was relatively straightforward. The majority of the predictions which used PRF scales were based on Murray's (1938) need-press theory of personality. Although clearly many relationships were possible given the number of personality and emotional dimensions included here, we chose to focus on a few theoretically meaningful relationships. To give a few examples, we expected high need for affiliation individuals to report more friendly and nurturant feelings than low need for affiliation individuals. Aggressive individuals should experience feelings of anger and frustration. Autonomous individuals ought to report feeling competitive and independent. Extraverts should experience feelings of joyfulness, as Costa and McCrae (1980) found extraversion to be associated with more positive affect.

In terms of situational parameters, it is expected that need for affiliation will be positively associated with loneliness in alone situations, as McAdams and Constantian (1983) found that high need for affiliation individuals were unhappy when alone. Similarly, extraverts should be happier when with others than when alone. The needs for achievement and play should predict feelings of productivity and enjoyment/fun in work versus recreation situations, respectively.

According to the congruence model of interactionism (Emmons et al., 1983), people should feel more positive emotions when they choose to be in situations which are congruent with their personalities, and more negative emotions when they are required to be in situations which are incongruent with their personalities. Thus, affiliative individuals should feel friendlier and less lonely when in chosen social situations as opposed to when they are forced to be alone. Achievement-oriented individuals should experience productive feelings when they choose to be working, and play-oriented individuals should feel enjoyment/fun when they choose to be recreating.

Results

Mean scores for each emotion and adjective pair were computed for each subject summed over the thirty days and five situations per day. Thus each overall mean value was based on approximately 150 occasions, yielding stable emotion trait scores. Similarly, mean emotion ratings were computed separately for work, recreation, social, and alone situations, and in chosen and imposed work, recreation, social, and alone situations. Product-moment correlations between certain PRF needs, EPQ scales, and emotions averaged across all situations are shown in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

In general, the results are predictable and meaningful, for example the significant correlations between need for order with feeling docile and peaceful and need for change with feeling active and aroused. Not

surprisingly, the need for aggression correlates significantly with feeling aggressive, and the need for impulsivity correlates significantly with impulsive feelings. However, need for dominance did not correlate with feeling domineering ($r = .07$, n.s.). Extraverts reported feeling more joy ($r = .47$, $p < .01$), and this is consistent with prior research (Costa & McCrae, 1980; Emmons & Diener, 1983) which found that extraversion was related to more positive affect. An interesting finding is that the infrequency scale of the PRF correlated significantly with feeling both angry/hostile and frustrated. Upon reflection, this was to be expected, since Jackson (1974) describes a high scorer on this scale as one who is "passively non-compliant" (p. 7). Also, this scale correlates positively with the PRF Aggression scale (Jackson, 1974).

Next, we correlated the personality scores with the emotion words within social, alone, work, and recreation situations separately. The correlations between emotions and personality dispositions within the four types of situations are shown in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

Surprisingly, extraversion correlates significantly with feeling joyful in both alone and social situations. Also surprisingly, need for affiliation does not correlate with feeling lonely in solitary situations, nor does need for affiliation correlate with feeling friendly in social situations. Within work situations, need for achievement was positively correlated with feeling productive as hypothesized. Need for achievement was also negatively associated with productive feelings while in recreation

situations, as predicted. The difference between these correlations was significant (t= 2.63, $p<.01$). Need for play was negatively correlated with enjoyment/fun within work situations and positively related to enjoyment/fun in recreation situations (for the difference, t= 2.18, $p<$ .05). Thus the congruence model of interactionism appears stonger in work/recreation situations than it did in social/alone situations.

We then correlated the emotion ratings with the personality traits within chosen versus imposed social, alone, work, and recreation situations separately. These correlations for social and alone situations with the interpersonal dispositions are given in Table 3.

Insert Table 3 about here

The purpose of distinguishing between chosen and imposed situations is to determine whether a given personality dimension correlates more strongly with the relevant emotion within chosen situations of a given type which are compatible with that personality dimension, as opposed to imposed situations of the opposite type. Thus, in a sense we are examining the interactive effects of choice and type of situation, rather than one or the other separately. In Table 3, it can be seen that in most cases, this general hypothesis was supported by the data. For example, need for affiliation correlates positively with feeling friendly in chosen-social situations, and negatively with friendly feelings in imposed-alone situations (for the difference, t= 2.64, $p<.05$). Similarly, extraverts report more joy when in social situations of their own choosing as compared to when in imposed-alone situations (t= 2.88, $p<.01$).

Neuroticism correlates with reported feelings of unhappiness in imposed social situations (r= .35, p<.05), but neurotics are less unhappy when they choose to be alone (r= -.19, n.s., for the difference t= 2.20, p< .05).

Some interesting findings arose in chosen versus imposed work and recreation situations as well. It was found that need for achievement correlated significantly with productive feelings in chosen work situations (r= .44, p <.05) and negatively with feeling productive in imposed recreation situations (r= -.18, n.s., for the difference t= 2.38, p .05). Need for play correlated .50 with enjoyment/fun in chosen-recreation situations, but -.33 with enjoyment/fun in imposed-work situations (t= 3.10, p <.01). Thus the value of distinguishing between chosen and imposed situations is apparent. The results obtained were generally more supportive of the congruence model after doing so.

Discussion

The present research focused on an interactional approach to the relationships between personality and emotions, using emotion reports collected over time in ecologically valid settings, i.e. individual's everyday lives. Theoretically meaningful relationships were found to exist between various personality dimensions and specific emotional traits. The congruence model of interactionism did not receive strong support until we distinguished between chosen and imposed situations, and then several significant interactional effects were found.

Nevertheless, there is one potential limitation to the present study, that being the small sample size (22). Correlations based on small samples tend to be unstable, and this must be kept in mind when evaluating

the results of this study. However, it should be noted that the emotion ratings of individuals were highly stable since they were based on a large number of occasions. The nature of the present research design and the type of data gathered necessarily placed severe restrictions on the number of subjects that could participate.

Both the personality inventories and the daily emotion measures were self-report in nature. Thus, one might raise the question of whether we are dealing with real feelings or only with the way people describe themselves. First, it should be noted that the two types of measures were extremely different. Personality inventories generally tap global interests and behavior trends across a variety of abstract situations, whereas the daily reports tapped specific feelings in specific situations. Second, the correlations varied across situations, indicating that we are not simply tapping global self-descriptions. Third, some obvious relationships in terms of semantic similarity of the traits and feelings (e.g. need for dominance and feeling domineering) did not emerge as would be expected if a simple self-description process could account for our findings.

We have reason to believe that response bias could have had only a minimal impact on the results of this study. The subjects' identities were concealed through the use of pseudonyms, thus decreasing any motivation to alter the situations in their lives and the feelings they reported in those situations. Second, Diener and Larsen (in press) as well as Johnston & Hackman (1977) have shown that social desirability and extreme response sets contribute negligible amounts of variance in the repeated use of mood questionnaires. Furthermore, we have used a number

of artifact measures to check on number usage as a response style, which are described in detail in Diener and Larsen and Diener and Emmons (in press).

Although we have used these situational dimensions before, a question might be raised regarding the relative arbitrariness of the classification of situations into work-recreation and social-alone. Clearly this is a very broad, superordinate level of classification. Even so, theoretically meaningful relationships were uncovered. Moreover, the results of a multi-dimensional scaling analysis of situational similarity (Emmons, 1984) revealed that individuals did perceive relatively specific situations in terms of two dimensions, social versus alone and work versus recreation.

The present findings proceed beyond previous efforts which examined the relationship between affect and personality (e.g. Costa & McCrae, 1980). Not only did we examine specific emotions rather than global affect, we also examined the conditions under which these emotions were experienced. For example, although we found extraversion to be positively associated with joy, supporting Costa & McCrae's (1980) finding, we also found that extraverts are more joyful when they choose to be with others as opposed to when they are required to be alone. Thus, extraverts are not chronically happy. Similarly, neurotic individuals are not always unhappy, as previous findings (Costa & McCrae, 1980) would indicate. They are most unhappy when they are forced into interaction with others, and least unhappy when they choose solitude. Clearly, interpersonal maneuvers are apt to be an especially troublesome area for neurotic individuals. Future research could profitably address the question of which types of

social interactions neurotic people find most uncomfortable (e.g. is the other person of lower or higher status).

Another interesting finding was that individuals high in the need for autonomy do feel more dominant and independent, but only when they are with others. Apparently these feelings are salient only when autonomous individuals are interacting with others. Perhaps they convey these feelings to others as a cue which communicates their desire to avoid attachment and to maintain their sense of freedom.

The present results are compatible with temperament theories of personality which focus on the emotional lives of individuals. Temperament approaches to personality, beginning with Galen's typology of the four temperaments through revisions by Wundt in the early part of this century to recent theories of temperament (Buss & Plomin, 1984) have emphasized the importance of emotional functioning for understanding personality. In the present study we found that temperament personality traits (e.g. extraversion, impulsivity) were related to the experience of certain specific emotions. However we also found that non-temperament personality traits (e.g. needs for autonomy, change, and order) were also related to the frequency of certain specific emotions. Plutchik (1980) suggests that personality traits must be defined in terms of interpersonal relations in order to be considered equivalent to mixtures of emotions. However the present research has also shown that intrapsychic traits (such as the needs for order and change) have emotional ties as well.

The present results also indicate that theories of personality and emotion need to take into account the role of situational parameters. The experience of certain emotions are not always independent of the context

in which individuals find themselves. This point is related to the tenets of modern social behaviorism theory (Staats & Burns, 1982). Staats and Burns' position is that individual differences in personality traits arise from differences in emotional-motivational systems, and the emotional-motivational system determines how the individual will experience different situations.

Implications of the Present Study

The results of this study contain implications for research on situation selection (Emmons et al., 1984; Snyder, 1983). The findings in this study that those high in need for achievement felt productive in work situations that they rated as chosen and those high in need for play felt fun and enjoyment in recreation situations they rated as chosen sheds light on the processes influencing situational choices. Emmons et al. reported that most subjects chose situations on the basis of their affective valence, i.e. approached situations which led to positive affect and avoided situations which led to negative affect. However, a small group of individuals actually selected situations despite the affective consequences of these situations (i.e. spent more time in situations which led to negative affect and avoided situations which led to positive affect). Examining more specific emotional traits, such as "productive" may help explain this apparent paradox. Individuals may choose situations in order to experience these specific emotions, rather than global happiness and unhappiness.

The present results also have implications for the conceptualization and measurement of personality traits. Current approaches to the analysis of personality traits, such as the act frequency approach (Buss & Craik,

1983) focus exclusively on behavior as the sole referent for a given trait. However, as Moskowitz (1982) pointed out, behavior is only one type of referent for a personality construct, with others being expectancies, needs, goals, and values. One could rightfully add emotions to this list of personality construct referents. In fact, the primary manifestation of certain traits may be more in terms of what the person feels than what behaviors are enacted (neuroticism, for example). Presumably the frequency of thought content could also be tracked over time, perhaps by using a experience sampling or "beeper" methodology (Larson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1983). The focus would be on an "emotional state frequency" rather than on act frequency.

Recently, several authors have expressed concern over the pervasiveness of the cognitive revolution in psychology (Cofer, 1981; Pervin, 1980; Tomkins, 1981). The cognitive revolution's invasion into the field of personality has led to the abandonment of interest in the relationship between personality and emotion. There is reason to believe that this trend may be changing, since recently it has become fashionable to study emotion once again. This is a healthy sign; clearly any viable theory of personality must recognize the role of emotional functioning within individuals.

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Author Notes

A version of this paper was presented at the 92nd annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, August 1984. The authors would like to thank Laurie Emmons for her assistance during various phases of this project, and Ellen Taylor for her helpful comments on an earlier draft of the paper. Address correspondence and reprint requests to Robert A. Emmons, Department of Psychology, University of Illinois, 603 E. Daniel St., Champaign, IL 61820.

Table 1

Correlations Between Personality Variables and Emotions

Personality Variable	r	Emotion
Achievement	.22	productive
Affiliation	.25	friendly/sociable
Affiliation	.19	nurturant
Aggression	.37*	aggressive
Aggression	.18	angry/hostile
Aggression	.32	frustrated
Autonomy	.42*	competitive
Autonomy	.27	dominant
Autonomy	.48**	independent
Change	.40*	active/aroused
Dominance	.07	domineering
Extraversion	.47**	joyful
Harmavoidance	.28	cautious/wary
Impulsivity	.60**	impulsive
Infrequency	.37*	angry/hostile
Infrequency	.37*	frustrated
Neuroticism	.29	unhappy
Order	.66**	docile/peaceful

Note. *$p<.05$, **$p<.01$.

Table 2

Correlations Between Personality and Emotion

Within Social and Alone Situations

Social		Alone
.20	Affiliation-friendly	-.07
-.17	Affiliation-lonely	-.04
.19	Affiliation-nurturant	-.02
.49**	Autonomy-dominant	-.02
.48**	Autonomy-independent	.22
-.10	Dominant-dominant	.18
.52**	Extraversion-joyful	.39*
.19	Neuroticism-unhappy	.11
Work		**Recreation**
.33	Achievement-productive	-.21
-.29	Play-enjoyment/fun	.35*

Note. *$p<.05$, **$p<.01$.

Table 3

Correlations Between Personality and Emotion Within Chosen versus Imposed Situations

Chosen-Social		Imposed-Alone
.25a	Affiliation-friendly	-.37*b
-.24	Affiliation-lonely	.17
.24	Affiliation-nurturant	-.27
.49**	Autonomy-dominant	.13
.47**	Autonomy-independent	.46**
-.11	Dominant-dominant	.07
.62**a	Extraversion-joy	.00b
.15	Neuroticism-unhappy	.13
Imposed-Social		**Chosen-Alone**
-.07	Affiliation-friendly	.10
-.03	Affiliation-lonely	-.15
.03	Affiliation-nurturant	-.10
.34	Autonomy-dominant	-.04
.42*	Autonomy-independent	-.02
.00	Dominant-dominant	-.12
.29	Extraversion-joy	.43*
.35*a	Neuroticism-unhappy	-.19b

Note. Subscripts a and b denote correlations that are significantly different from each other, two-tailed t-test.